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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Sixty-third session

Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 22 March 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Bras Gomes

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Sixth periodic report of Spain (*continued*) (E/C.12/ESP/6 and E/C.12/ESP/QPR/6)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Spain took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Martín Bernabé** (Spain) said that the Government used a range of tools to foster employment and entrepreneurship, including service packages or charters and an employment strategy developed in cooperation with the autonomous communities. Moreover, the authorities participated in a programme developed by the European Commission to assess the performance of public services.

3. The national employment strategy featured a range of measures to improve employability and foster entrepreneurship among priority groups by providing tailored training to meet the needs of the job market. The strategy was evaluated on an annual basis, in order to help the Government develop annual plans and allocate appropriate resources to the autonomous communities.

4. Plans of action targeted vulnerable groups, including long-term unemployed workers over the age of 45 years, benefit claimants and persons under the age of 30 not in work or education. Measures for the latter, within the framework of the Youth Guarantee programme, included guidance and training to help them enter the job market or re-enter the education system. Since the public employment service had become involved in managing the programme, the number of participants had more than doubled to over 1 million. The Government had also launched a programme to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, including through incentives for employers; by the start of 2017, the programme had helped more than 80,000 people find a job. The Government was working with the autonomous communities to ensure that policies were developed and coordinated in such a way as to ensure better services to citizens.

5. **Ms. Rodríguez Alba** (Spain) said that the right to strike was enshrined in the Constitution and protected by law; no internal or external sanctions could be imposed on striking workers. The use of propaganda or other non-violent forms of persuasion was considered part of the right to strike. However, any action involving coercion was an offence under the Criminal Code, as it prevented the enjoyment by others of rights such as the right to work or to moral integrity.

6. **Ms. Ángeles Villegas** (Spain), in response to a question about court cases related to strike action, said that available court data indicated that 22 proceedings related to the right to strike had been initiated in 2015. Discrepancies between the number of cases lodged and the number of proceedings resulting in a conviction stemmed from the fact that such cases generally involved group, rather than individual, actions. Amendments to the Criminal Code in 2015 had lessened the severity of the penalties imposed, by establishing a maximum sentence and introducing fines as an alternative to imprisonment; the courts could decide, on a case by case basis, which type of penalty to impose. The 2015 amendments applied retroactively to persons charged prior to the date when the new provisions had entered into force.

7. Under the provisions of the Criminal Code, picketing involving violence towards persons or property constituted a criminal offence, as it prevented others from exercising their rights. In 2017, the Supreme Court of Justice had ruled that individual criminal responsibility must be established in all such cases.

8. **Ms. de la Concha Renero** (Spain) said that the social security deficit and the sustainability of the pension system were priority concerns. Indeed, an extraordinary plenary session of the Congress of Deputies had been convened the previous week to discuss the future of the pension system. Since 1994, all modifications to the pension system had required cross-party agreement, under a parliamentary pact renewed every five

years. The cross-party group was currently discussing social security reforms. A social dialogue round table had also been established, providing a tripartite approach to solving the problem of pensions. Furthermore, all bills would be subject to public consultation, reflecting the important role played by civil society.

9. It would be difficult to comment further on plans to reduce the social security deficit until the Congress of Deputies had completed its deliberations. A State loan was currently being used to cover pension payments until a definitive solution was found. Discussions on the future of the pensions system revolved in part around the funding model, namely whether the system should remain contributory or be financed from tax revenue. Since 2008, social protection had been provided through a contributory system covering pensions and social security benefits and a non-contributory system for pensions and health care; the former was funded through employers' and workers' contributions, and the latter from the State budget. The 2008 economic crisis had not had a significant impact on pensioners, as the State guaranteed a minimum pension for all. Moreover, top-up payments were provided to guarantee a minimum subsistence level.

10. The Government was progressively expanding the scope of its social insurance system, which provided one of the highest levels of protection in the world, with a range of benefits including disability, maternity and paternity allowances. Measures had been taken to extend coverage to vulnerable groups, such as part-time employees, domestic workers and agricultural workers, in order to ensure sufficient levels of social protection. The right to social security was unwaivable and Department of Labour inspectors ensured compliance.

11. On the issue of access to pensions, the reform process launched in 2014 would not take effect until 2025; the long transition period would give people time to adapt to the changes. An online pension calculator tool had been developed to enable workers to estimate their future pension entitlements, thus helping them plan for the future.

12. Spain's ageing population posed a challenge for the social services system. The Government encouraged people to retire later, thereby increasing their pension entitlements. Under the Government's active retirement strategy, introduced in 2013, people who continued to work past the age of retirement could claim half their pension until they stopped working completely, at which point they would start to receive 100 per cent of their pension. Moreover, recently adopted legislation enabled self-employed persons who continued to work past retirement age to claim 100 per cent of their pension.

13. Following the example of other European countries, the Government had ceased to link pensions to the Consumer Price Index and had instead introduced a new index that reflected the economic development of the social security system. A guaranteed minimum annual increase of 0.25 per cent had been established for pensions; although that rate had remained unchanged in recent years owing to the social security deficit, the purchasing power of pensioners had not been affected and it was expected that, once the labour market had revived and the social security system had secured new sources of funding, the annual pension adjustment would be revised.

14. **Ms. Santos Domingo** (Spain) said that the non-contributory pension system, which included retirement and disability pensions, covered more than 450,000 people not entitled to a contributory pension. A minimum pension was guaranteed, and provisions existed for recipients of disability pensions to also receive an income from work performed on a self-employed basis.

15. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that measures to combat poverty and exclusion also included a minimum integration income, paid to cover basic needs; spending on such benefits had increased in recent years. Since 2000, the Government had developed plans to foster social inclusion and combat poverty; the latest plan had covered the period 2013–2016. Two of the indicators used to assess poverty and exclusion, namely severe material deprivation and very low work intensity in a household, had improved; the indicator related to the risk of poverty had remained unchanged. While the Government planned to address that problem within the framework of its poverty reduction plans, it should be noted that the share of the total population at risk of poverty or social exclusion (the AROPE index) did not take account of the fact that levels of property ownership in Spain were very high and

that a percentage of the population, in particular older persons, paid rent at significantly below the market rate.

16. It was true that there were significant regional disparities in the poverty rate, which was highest in the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla. However, when comparing the rates across autonomous regions, it must be borne in mind that they were measured against the national income threshold and not against the available income in each region. If the methodology were changed so that the risk of poverty was calculated in relation to the threshold of the individual autonomous community, there would not be such obvious disparities. In terms of addressing the disparities, the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality co-financed social services for families and children to combat child poverty, which was of particular concern to the Government. That annual contribution was divided among the autonomous communities on the basis of such criteria as population and surface area, as well as the poverty rate. In recent years, additional annual subsidies of 2 million euros and 11 million euros had been provided to Ceuta and Melilla and the Canary Islands, respectively.

17. The multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion was taken into account in developing social policies and inclusion plans for the most disadvantaged groups. An active inclusion strategy was being implemented with a view to improving beneficiaries' employability, offering social protection benefits to those facing the greatest difficulties, and ensuring access to quality education, housing, employment and social services, inter alia. In addition, there were targeted measures and policies for specific groups, such as persons with disabilities and homeless persons.

18. The final evaluation of the National Reform Plan 2016 had been completed and would shortly be published on the Government website, describing in detail the 240 measures for social inclusion included in the Plan and the executed budget, which had been 8 per cent higher than initially planned. In terms of the evolution of social indicators over the duration of the Plan, the AROPE index had fallen by 4.3 per cent, there had been a small reduction in the Gini coefficient that measured inequality, the number of long-term unemployed had fallen by 28 per cent, the school dropout rate had fallen significantly, and life expectancy had increased. Work was now under way on a strategy to prevent and combat poverty, with four targets agreed by the ministries, autonomous communities and social agencies, namely to combat poverty and inequality, especially severe poverty and child poverty, invest in inclusive education and suitable employment, improve social protection and enhance coordination among all stakeholders.

19. **Mr. Vizcarro Germade** (Spain) said that the Government shared the Committee's concerns in relation to access to housing. To that end, both the 2013–2016 housing plan, which had been extended to 2017, and the new plan for 2018–2021 provided for support programmes to develop a stock of public rental housing, which were applied by the autonomous communities if they considered it to be a priority in their territories. It was true that the proportion of social housing for rent in Spain was low, but it must be borne in mind that the overall rental rate was also low compared to other European countries, as the home ownership rate stood at around 80 per cent. The housing policy model had been changed in 2013 in response to the severe economic constraints of the crisis, with resources being concentrated on priority areas, including the rental sector and the renovation of existing housing. There had thus been a significant reduction in financing for land development and support for mortgages. The reduction in development and construction was in any case in line with the urban development plans of the municipalities, which were now focused on sustainability and aimed to avoid the sprawling developments of the past. The provision of direct rental support to those beneficiaries most in need was a more efficient option in economic terms and would likely yield much more rapid results. Although it was true that little social housing had been created between 2013 and 2017, some 400 million euros (€) in rental subsidies had been provided to more than 275,000 beneficiaries during that period. Under the 2018–2021 housing plan, the level of direct rental support had increased from 40 to 50 per cent of rent for young people and persons over the age of 65; there was also special support for victims of eviction, who were entitled to receive up to 80 per cent, and, in exceptional situations, even 100 per cent of the rental amount, up to a maximum of €400.

20. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality provided services for two of the categories of homeless persons defined in the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS), namely persons in situations of rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind) and houselessness (with a temporary place to sleep in institutions or shelters). The Comprehensive National Strategy for Homeless Persons had been adopted in 2015 to provide policy guidance in a single reference document for the autonomous communities and municipalities. According to the findings of a recent survey, the number of centres for homeless persons had increased by 13.6 per cent, and there had also been an increase in public and private spending on services for homeless persons. The Strategy for Homeless Persons had five strands: prevention, awareness-raising, guaranteeing security and quality of life, promotion of services and exchange of information between public and private entities. The Government had provided €13 million in funding in 2016 to agencies working with homeless persons, to implement the innovative "Housing First" approach and support social inclusion for homeless persons. Work was under way between the Government and the voluntary sector to develop a common methodology to identify the number of homeless persons and define how best to meet their needs. There would be a midterm evaluation of the Strategy in 2019, by which time it was hoped that significant progress would have been made in reducing the number of homeless persons in Spain.

21. **Ms. González del Yerro** (Spain) said that the objective of Royal Decree-Law No. 16/2012 had been to increase the efficiency of the Spanish health system in order to guarantee its sustainability, and not to expand health-care coverage. A repeal of the Decree-Law would be problematic, as it would involve a return to the unsustainable situation that had led to the enactment of the instrument in the first place. Indeed, the Decree-Law had been adopted in order to combat the serious problem of health tourism, whereby citizens of other European Union Member States who had not been entitled to free health care in their own countries had moved to Spain, where it had been possible for them to easily obtain a Spanish health-care card, on the basis of which they could obtain a European health insurance card and return to their country of origin, having acquired full rights paid for by Spain. The Royal Decree-Law had thus not been intended to target disadvantaged migrants in an irregular situation, but persons who travelled to Spain specifically to take advantage of its free health care.

22. **Mr. Parra** (Spain) said that, in its judgment on the compatibility of Royal Decree-Law No. 16/2012 with all the international treaties to which Spain was a party, including the Covenant, the Constitutional Court had recalled that, under article 2 (1) of the Covenant, each State Party to the Covenant undertook to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, to the maximum of its available resources, which meant that the realization of the right to health and the other rights covered by the Covenant was subordinate to the availability of resources. The Constitutional Court had noted that article 12 (1) of the Covenant referred to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health but did not specify that the provision of services for the realization of that right must always be free of charge.

23. **Ms. Liebenberg**, recalling the Committee's general comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing, expressed concern that, according to recent statistics, personal expenditure on housing had increased by the largest percentage in the European Union and that average rental prices had risen by 4.3 per cent in Barcelona and 3.8 per cent in Madrid. She would be interested to hear what measures the Government was taking to regulate the private housing market, for example in areas such as mortgage bond foreclosures, private rental contracts and security of tenure. She wished to know whether the courts considered the reasonableness and proportionality of evictions, whether there were due process safeguards, and whether it was a requirement that alternative accommodation must be provided if the persons concerned would be left homeless as a result of an eviction.

24. **Mr. De Schutter**, noting that the State party's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights had been adopted just weeks after general comment No. 24 on State obligations in the context of business activities, said that the delegation might comment on whether there were any plans to update the Action Plan in the light of the Committee's guidance. In particular, two major lacunae should be addressed. First, the fact that Spanish

parent companies were not required to impose due diligence obligations on their foreign subsidiaries meant that foreign victims of human rights abuses committed by such subsidiaries outside the Spanish territory might have no access to remedies before Spanish courts. Secondly, since the possibility of imposing extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction had been restricted, victims must be Spanish or residing in Spain, and companies could only be prosecuted if domiciled in Spain, which meant there was no liability before Spanish courts for foreign subsidiaries of Spanish companies.

25. **Mr. Sadi** said that he would welcome information on how royal decrees came into being and on whether there was a system for the uniform application of social security standards across different autonomous regions.

26. **Mr. Kedzia** (Country Task Force) said that he would welcome clarification of whether Spanish law contained any provisions that could be qualified as "anti-strikebreaking", and whether the State party had any intention of reviewing article 315 (3) of the Criminal Code, which provided for penalties for coercion with regard to strike action. He would also like to know whether trade unions had been able to participate effectively in the process leading up to the solutions concerning the sustainability of the pension system, and whether there was a firm framework establishing the rights of social partners to participate in decision-making.

27. **Mr. Abdel-Moneim** said that, to use the language of economics, it seemed from paragraphs 22 to 64 of the State party's report that labour was paying the price for the mistakes of capital and enterprise. Referring to paragraph 38, he said that economic pressures other than employment might have been responsible for the deficits on the current account balance and devaluation of the exchange rate in the past. A similar conceptual approach was apparent in the reference to the econometric study that had identified a rise in wages as the main cause of increased unemployment between 2008 and 2010. In his view, such a view of employment was risky and could result in a failure to realize article 11 of the Covenant. Now that Spain had emerged from the crisis, it was time to review the economic decisions that had been taken at that time and ensure that full employment was always a key objective.

28. **Mr. Uprimny** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know, given the high number of evictions per year, what legal and institutional measures had been adopted to ensure that the Committee's views under the Optional Protocol in relation to specific cases were implemented, including the correction of the legal and institutional weaknesses identified by the Committee. As little improvement had been seen in the rate of poverty and inequality, he asked what was being done to ensure that the benefits of the fiscal system were distributed more fairly.

29. With regard to sexual and reproductive health care, he asked how the State party ensured that women's right to health was not compromised by regional differences in access to reproductive services, the practice of conscientious objection to abortion among medical professionals, and the legal obligation on persons aged between 16 and 18 years to obtain the consent of their legal representative before being granted an abortion.

30. He also noted that the ruling issued by the court in respect of Royal Decree-Law No. 16/2012 on the reform of the health-care system was regressive and did not take account of the Committee's jurisprudence.

31. **Mr. González-Aller Jurado** (Spain) said that a royal decree was a legislative measure adopted by the executive authorities and had the same status as other laws. Royal decrees were drawn up by the Council of State and approved by the Council of Ministers.

32. **Ms. Blázquez Martín** (Spain) said that the term *lanzamiento*, as opposed to *desahucio*, (both commonly translated as "eviction") referred to the transfer of possession of a building to the legal owner. It did not, therefore, necessarily imply the forced eviction of persons from their accommodation, as it also covered situations such as the changing of locks on abandoned properties. The Government was concerned by the high number of evictions, but it also wished to place the statistics in context. In 2016, in 57 per cent of cases, persons to whom an eviction notice had been served had complied with the notice voluntarily or had reached an agreement on how to proceed with the eviction. In 2015, only

32 per cent of foreclosures had resulted in a *lanzamiento*. All evictions were carried out in concordance with the Covenant and with the principles of reasonableness and proportionality, which were protected by law; the persons affected had the right to oppose an eviction notice, and the courts took into account the rights of tenants, and of families and minors, when deciding the details of the eviction. Social services were also involved in providing alternative housing and supporting the transition of evicted persons to such housing.

33. The Urban Rental Act had been amended in 2013, reducing the minimum rental term from five to three years, in an effort to revive the rental market. The law could not keep pace with the speed of change in the housing market, however. The minimum term was therefore open to further review.

34. **Ms. García Gasalla** (Spain) said that the Government had adopted the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in 2017 as a first step towards addressing the matter. A commission had been established to monitor the implementation of the plan, provide periodic updates, identify the organizations responsible for implementing each of the measures, and set indicators to measure progress. The plan would include measures to raise awareness in companies of their human rights obligations, examine discriminatory practices and introduce a system of incentives. A working group would be established to assess whether government policies to promote the involvement of businesses in international markets were in concordance with the guiding principles of the plan. The monitoring committee was also due to produce a report on legal mechanisms for holding businesses to account. Spain had various legislative and extrajudicial measures for ensuring that companies met their human rights responsibilities.

35. **Mr. Valverde Álvarez** (Spain) said that chambers of commerce played a role in ensuring that companies operating abroad met their human rights obligations, including by raising awareness of corporate social responsibility. Numerous agreements on the matter had been reached between Spanish chambers of commerce abroad. In addition, where public institutions received government financing or insurance for export activities, efforts were made to ensure that they complied with the State party's international human rights obligations throughout the project.

36. **Ms. Ángeles Villegas** (Spain) said that, although the adoption of a compliance system was not obligatory in certain sectors, almost all companies adopted such a system to ensure that they were not held criminally responsible for the actions of their representatives.

37. When introducing provisions on the responsibility of legal persons, the legislature had opted to create a closed list of offences, which meant that legal persons could be prosecuted only for offences covered by the Criminal Code. The extraterritorial application of the law was further restricted, as it applied only to certain offences and to companies domiciled in Spain.

38. Debate was ongoing regarding the responsibility of parent companies for offences committed by subsidiaries. The concept of objective criminal responsibility of legal persons did not currently exist under Spanish law, which meant that the parent company itself needed to have committed an offence before it could be held responsible. As the concept of criminal responsibility of legal persons had not long been included in Spanish law, the legislature was not yet in a position to make decisions on the matter.

39. **Mr. Parra** (Spain) said that the Ministry of Justice was examining the views adopted by the Committee under the Optional Protocol with regard to communication No. 5/2015. It was currently working to determine the legal costs incurred by the complainant, which was the main point of contention. In response to the complaint regarding the legislative system of notifications by edict, the Civil Procedure Act had been amended in line with the Committee's recommendations.

40. **Ms. Blázquez Martín** (Spain) said that the views of the Committee on the two cases had contributed greatly to establishing the jurisprudence that served as a regulatory guarantee in eviction cases.

41. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** (Country Task Force) said that, as gender inequality had increased as a result of austerity measures, she wished to know how the Government

reconciled the application of such measures with the need to attain gender equality, what was being done to ensure that women were not affected disproportionately by austerity measures, and whether it intended to improve the efficacy of awareness-raising campaigns and introduce an education-based plan to combat gender stereotypes.

42. Given that the school dropout rate remained high in Spain, particularly among Roma children, she asked what was being done to address the social factors that encouraged school dropout, in particular among vulnerable groups, and whether the higher dropout rate among male students was related to the focus placed in social policies on men as primary wage earners. She wished to know what was being done to address the segregation of Roma and migrant students in education, including within schools; to provide education on Roma culture and its essential contributions to Spanish culture; and to ensure that educational curricula reflected the fact that Spain had become a country of immigration. She also asked how the Government reconciled those educational needs with the decision to make primary-level education on citizenship and human rights and secondary-level education on civics and ethics non-compulsory.

43. She asked what measures had been taken to ensure affordable access to the benefits of scientific progress, including access to the Internet, in particular for disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Given the reduction in spending on culture during the economic crisis, she also wished to know what steps the Government was taking to ensure access to culture and whether it could provide updated statistics.

44. **Ms. Rodríguez Alba** (Spain) said that, while all companies were obliged to implement measures to promote gender equality in the workplace, equality plans were mandatory only for those that employed more than 250 people and/or those that were covered by collective bargaining agreements. Companies not falling into either of those categories were free to adopt an equality plan on a voluntary basis. While no data was available on the number of equality plans in place in businesses across the country, the authorities were moving towards implementing compulsory registration of all equality plans — whether adopted on a mandatory or voluntary basis — so as to increase the visibility of such plans and make it possible to gather statistical information on them.

45. In the area of flexible working, Spain had one of the most advanced legal frameworks in Europe with regard to the right to give up work to look after one's family. Measures were also in place to support those people who chose to keep working after they became parents, such as the possibility of adjusting working hours to fit with the family's needs and the increase in the length of paternity leave, which was non-transferable and paid in full. Efforts were being made to include clauses on flexible working and teleworking in collective bargaining agreements.

46. **Ms. Aragonés Pomares** (Spain) said that the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities had produced an initial draft of the Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunity for the period 2018–2021. A wide range of stakeholders, including associations representing rural and Roma women, civil society organizations and the country's two largest trade unions, were being consulted on the text. The Plan was intended to address a number of key areas, including the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence, the empowerment of women in the economic and political spheres, and sexism in the media and advertising. It was hoped that the Plan would be adopted during the second half of 2018.

47. The Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities was working closely with the Department of Education to combat gender stereotypes in school textbooks and university teaching programmes. Over the previous year, the Government had been carrying out a project to promote the use of anonymized curricula vitae in order to tackle discrimination against women, particularly those groups who faced multiple forms of discrimination, such as women with disabilities. Other initiatives included empowerment and leadership training, to encourage more women to take up positions on decision-making bodies in the agricultural and fisheries sectors. The Institute provided annual subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises; in 2017, it had paid out a total of €1.25 million to 218 companies. In addition, 142 businesses had been awarded a quality mark for their efforts in the area of equality. In November 2017, cross-party support had been achieved on reforms to legislation on gender-based violence, trafficking and support for victims of sexual violence.

48. **Mr. Ferrán Priestley** (Spain) said that the principles of gender equality and equality of opportunity were recognized in the Constitution and other key legal instruments. The Ministry of Education had developed a strategic plan that included measures to prevent gender-based violence in schools and ensure that educational establishments were safe places for all.

49. The school dropout rate had dropped by 12 percentage points over the previous 10 years, and the Government estimated that it was on track to meet the objective set by the European Union to reduce the rate to 15 per cent by 2020. Initiatives were in place to help children stay in school and provide them with guidance and support.

50. Other programmes being implemented in schools were aimed at ensuring the inclusion of children with special educational needs and promoting the acquisition of reading skills.

51. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that, as children generally attended the school closest to their home, schools in areas with a large Roma population would naturally have a higher concentration of Roma students. The State Council of the Roma People had a number of working groups, one of which focused on the area of education. While the dropout rate remained higher among Roma students, especially girls, than in other population groups, there had been an improvement in the enrolment rate of Roma at the secondary level. Approximately €6 million in funding had been received from the European Social Fund and other sources for the Promociona programme, an initiative that supported children as they made the transition from primary to secondary school. In some parts of the country, teaching materials had been developed to promote Roma culture and history. The Roma Cultural Institute also worked to promote Roma culture.

52. **Mr. Valverde Álvarez** (Spain) said that the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology ran outreach projects designed to increase interest in scientific subjects, including through photography exhibitions and events to raise public awareness of notable scientists. Summer school programmes were available to help provide children with opportunities to explore science and technology. In addition, science and computer programming workshops were run with the aim of overcoming the gender gap in those fields. The Government provided annual subsidies totalling €3.25 million for activities intended to promote science, technology and innovation.

53. **Ms. Torre Villaverde** (Spain) said that the Ministry of Culture collected a wide range of statistical information, all of which was publicly available on the Internet. In 2015, public spending at the local, regional and national levels had amounted to more than €4 billion — an average of €102 per capita nationally — with the largest amount of money coming from local administrations. While spending on culture had been affected by the economic crisis, the reductions that had been seen previously had begun to be reversed. The Ministry had put together a programme of cultural events and performances that local administrations could access at reduced rates, thereby making quality content available to a wider audience. The Roma Cultural Institute awarded a number of cultural prizes and had established a library of Roma cultural works at the University of Alcalá. A cross-cutting initiative was in place across a number of ministries with the aim of extending broadband coverage to the whole population. Households tended to spend more on television and the Internet than on other means of consuming culture.

54. **Mr. Uprimny** said that he would be interested to learn how the elimination of mandatory sex education aligned with the principle of comprehensive education for all and with the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights.

55. **Mr. González-Aller Jurado** (Spain) said that a response to that question would be provided in writing. All the questions raised by members of the Committee had been important and relevant, enabling the State party to advance and consolidate economic, social and cultural rights.

56. **Mr. Uprimny** said that the dialogue had been sincere, direct and respectful. The Committee's concluding observations and recommendations would help to improve the enjoyment of those rights in Spain.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.